

**EVENT: Special Legislative Session on IRIB**

**DATE: Nov. 14, 2007, House Chamber of Legislative Hall**

GOOD EVENING.

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TODAY TO DISCUSS WITH YOU OUR PLANS FOR THE BUILDING OF A NEW BRIDGE OVER THE INDIAN RIVER INLET, AND TO ADDRESS CONCERNS AND QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE.

WITH ME TODAY ARE SOME OF THE PROFESSIONALS THAT ARE LEADING OUR EFFORT TO KEEP YOUR BRIDGES SAFE, AND THAT WILL GET THIS PROJECT DONE. THEY ARE BOB TAYLOR; DENNIS O'SHEA, NATALIE BARNHART, DOUG ROBB, DAVE DUKE AND JOHN EUSTIS.

THIS IS THE SAME DEVOTED TEAM THAT HAS ALLOWED DELDOT TO SAY WE HAVE ONE OF THE TOP 10 BRIDGE PROGRAMS IN THE NATION. WE HAVE DONE A BETTER JOB THAN MOST STATES OF COMMITTING THE RESOURCES AND ENERGY TO KEEPING THE TRAVELING PUBLIC SAFE.

I WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIVATE COMPANIES THAT HAVE WORKED ON THE PROJECT TO DATE ARE NOT HERE THIS EVENING. THERE IS GOOD REASON FOR THEIR ABSENCE.

HAVING THOSE REPRESENTATIVES HERE COULD JEOPARDIZE THE INVESTIGATION WE HAVE EMBARKED UPON. I APOLOGIZE IF THIS WAS NOT YOUR EXPECTATION, BUT I DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THIS WITH YOU PRIOR TO THE NOTICE OF THIS MEETING BEING PUBLICIZED.

NOW I'D LIKE TO REVISIT SOME OF THE INFORMATION WE HAVE ALREADY MADE PUBLIC. A LONGER BRIDGE LENGTH IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF CONTINUING PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WITH THE APPROACHES FOR THE NEW BRIDGE. DUE TO THE TYPES OF SUBSURFACE SOILS IN THIS AREA, CONSOLIDATION WAS REQUIRED IN ADVANCE TO PREVENT SETTLEMENT FROM OCCURRING AFTER THE ROADWAY IS CONSTRUCTED. PROJECTS WITH SUCH GEOTECHNICAL ISSUES REQUIRE EXTENSIVE ENGINEERING ANALYSIS BASED UPON SOIL SAMPLES FROM THE SITE. THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE SUBSURFACE SOILS HAS PROVEN TO BE A VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION EVEN WITH THE INVOLVEMENT OF GEOTECHNICAL SPECIALISTS. AS OF THIS SUMMER, APPROXIMATELY 60 PERCENT OF THE CONSOLIDATION OF SUBSURFACE SOILS HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. HOWEVER, IT COULD TAKE AN ADDITIONAL SEVEN YEARS TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED 95 PERCENT CONSOLIDATION IF THE EMBANKMENTS ARE LEFT AS IS. AS A RESULT, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING ISSUES:

- THE EMBANKMENTS HAVE SETTLED BEYOND THE ORIGINAL PREDICTIONS. THIS MEANS THEY ARE NOW BELOW THE ELEVATIONS NEEDED TO TIE INTO THE NEW BRIDGE.

- ROADWAY EMBANKMENTS ARE SHIFTING AND LEANING TOWARD THE WEST, AND IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT TO ESTIMATE THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS PROBLEM.
- AS RESULT OF THE WEIGHT OF THE EMBANKMENTS AND THEIR UNEXPECTED WESTERLY SHIFTING, NEARBY ROADS HAVE BEEN IMPACTED, REQUIRING ROUTE 1 PAVEMENT REPAIRS AND ROAD 50A RECONSTRUCTION.
- THE NEW BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION WOULD BE DELAYED UNTIL THE PROBLEMS WITH THE SETTLEMENT ARE RESOLVED.

DUE TO THIS PROBLEM, OUR OPTIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS:

- REBUILDING THE APPROACHES WITH LIGHTWEIGHT FILL MATERIAL TO REDUCE THE NEED FOR GREATER AMOUNT OF CONSOLIDATION. THIS OPTION WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL TIME TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE EMBANKMENT DESIGN AND WOULD ALSO INTERFERE WITH THE BRIDGE CONTRACTOR'S ACCESS TO THE INLET AREA. THE COST OF THIS SPECIAL FILL MATERIAL, HOWEVER, IS SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN TRADITIONAL EMBANKMENT SOILS
- ADDING A GREATER AMOUNT OF FILL MATERIAL IN ANTICIPATION OF ACCELERATING THE CONSOLIDATION RATE AND REDUCING THE SEVEN-YEAR ESTIMATE. THIS WOULD NOT HOWEVER SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF SHIFTING EMBANKMENTS. THESE CONCERNS WOULD REMAIN AS WELL AS THE RISK OF

RELYING ON THE UNCERTAINTIES OF THE RATE OF SOIL CONSOLIDATION.

- REMOVING A MAJORITY OF THE FILL EMBANKMENT WHERE SETTLEMENT ISSUES ARE MOST SEVERE AND BUILDING A LONGER STRUCTURE.

AFTER CAREFUL CONSIDERATION OF ALL THE ISSUES AND REVIEWING OUR OPTIONS, IT BECAME CLEAR THAT REGARDLESS OF THE PATH FORWARD WE CHOSE, THERE WOULD BE INCREASED COSTS INVOLVED. WHAT BECAME THE PROMINENT ISSUE THEN WAS THE TIMELY COMPLETION OF THE NEW BRIDGE. REBUILDING THE APPROACHES, OR WAITING FOR THE SUBSURFACE SOILS TO PROPERLY CONSOLIDATE, WOULD HAVE TAKEN LONGER AND WAS LESS PREDICTABLE THAN BUILDING A LONGER STRUCTURE. THESE OPTIONS WOULD ALSO DELAY THE DESIGN/BUILD CONTRACTOR FROM ACCESSING THE SITE TO START BUILDING THE NEW BRIDGE. THESE OPTIONS WOULD HAVE LEFT MORE TO CHANCE THAN IS ACCEPTABLE FOR THIS PROJECT.

THEREFORE, THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE PROJECT IS THAT THE NEW BRIDGE IS PROPOSED TO BE 2,600 FEET LONG. THE PREVIOUS DESIGN CALLED FOR A BRIDGE APPROXIMATELY 1,400 FEET LONG. AS WITH PREVIOUS PROPOSALS, THE PIERS WILL BE OUT OF THE WATER.

ON OCTOBER 29, WE ADVERTISED THE REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR DESIGN/BUILD TEAMS. THESE WILL BE REVIEWED BY DECEMBER 19, 2007, FOLLOWED BY THE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP). WE HOPE TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR THIS PROJECT BY SPRING 2008, WITH CONSTRUCTION EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETE BY 2011.

I HAVE ALREADY MADE A PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO INVESTIGATE HOW WE GOT TO THIS POINT, AND I WILL REITERATE THAT NOW. WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH OUR DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL, THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, AND OTHERS TO ENSURE WE PROCEED IN THE PROPER MANNER. MOST RECENTLY, WE DETERMINED THE APPROPRIATE FIRST STEP IS TO HIRE AN OUTSIDE CLAIMS CONSULTANT TO REVIEW THE INFORMATION AND DATA RELATED TO THE GEOTECHNICAL WORK. I WANT TO CAUTION EVERYONE THAT THIS PROCESS WILL NOT HAPPEN OVERNIGHT, BUT WE WILL TAKE DELIBERATE STEPS TO CONDUCT A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE PROCESS, DESIGN DETAILS AND OVERALL DECISIONS THAT HAVE BROUGHT US TO THIS POINT. WE WILL FOLLOW THE POLICIES WE HAVE IN PLACE THAT SERVE TO PROTECT THE STATE FROM ERRORS AND OMISSIONS WHILE RECOGNIZING THE COMPLEXITIES OF DEVELOPING ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS FOR DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. ULTIMATELY, OUR ABILITY TO SEEK REIMBURSEMENT FOR ADDITIONAL PROJECT COSTS WILL BE DETERMINED BY THIS PROCESS.

I WANT TO BE CLEAR THAT I WILL FOLLOW THIS THROUGH TO CONCLUSION, BUT CANNOT PREDICT WHAT THE FINAL OUTCOME WILL BE.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME QUESTIONS AS TO THE TIMING OF HOW THE INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SETTLEMENT ISSUE WAS COMMUNICATED. I HOPE TO CLARIFY THIS NOW. WHEN WE COMPLETED BUILDING THE NORTH EMBANKMENT IN DECEMBER 2006 AND THE SOUTH EMBANKMENT IN FEBRUARY 2007, WE EXPECTED APPROXIMATELY 5-FEET OF EMBANKMENT SETTLEMENT OVER 4-8 MONTHS. HOWEVER, IN THE FIRST THREE MONTHS, WE HAD 5-FEET OF SETTLEMENT OF ONE OF THE EMBANKMENTS. THIS INFORMATION WAS COMMUNICATED TO SEVERAL LEGISLATORS IN A MARCH 2007 LETTER, AS WELL AS MY EXPECTATION THAT THIS WAS STILL A MANAGEABLE SITUATION *BASED UPON THE INFORMATION MADE AVAILABLE TO US*. I ALSO MENTIONED IN THAT LETTER THAT WE WERE INITIATING A REQUEST FOR A DETAILED, INDEPENDENT REVIEW AND ANALYSIS FOR THE GEOTECHNICAL DESIGN OF THE APPROACHES. THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW WAS COMPLETED IN AUGUST OF THIS YEAR, GIVING US MORE INFORMATION ON THE EMBANKMENT STABILITY AND THE AMOUNT OF CONSOLIDATION OF THE SUBSURFACE SOILS. WE THEN REVIEWED THESE RESULTS WITH FEDERAL HIGHWAY OFFICIALS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE.

ALL THIS LED US TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY. YOU'LL NOTE THE LETTER I REFERENCED AND A MORE DETAILED TIMELINE HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO YOU THIS EVENING.

ANOTHER AREA THAT CONTINUES TO COME UP IS SAFETY. AS THE SECRETARY OF THIS DEPARTMENT AND AS A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER, SAFETY OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC IS MY NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. I HAVE REVIEWED THE DATA, STUDIED THE REPORTS AND DISCUSSED THE ISSUES MANY TIMES WITH THE DELDOT TEAM YOU SEE BEHIND ME. THE EXISTING INDIAN RIVER INLET BRIDGE IS SAFE AND IN NO IMMEDIATE DANGER OF FAILING. IN OUR AUGUST BRIDGE INSPECTION, OUR ANALYSIS DETERMINED THE DECK AND SUPERSTRUCTURE ARE RATED IN FAIR AND SATISFACTORY CONDITION. MORE SIGNIFICANTLY, OUR ANNUAL DIVE INSPECTION IN SEPTEMBER INDICATES THE PIERS UNDER THE WATER ARE STABLE, AND THAT THE RIP-RAP PLACED IN 1989 IS INTACT.

THIS IS THE MOST MONITORED BRIDGE IN THE STATE, AND OUR NUMBER ONE BRIDGE PRIORITY.

THE NEED FOR REPLACING THE BRIDGE IS DUE TO THE SEVERE SCOURING IN THE INLET ADJACENT TO THE BRIDGE SUBSTRUCTURE THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE OVER THE DECADES. THE VELOCITY OF THE WATER CURRENT IN THE INLET IS EXTREMELY HIGH AND UNIQUE. FUTURE CHANGES TO THE SCOUR HOLES ARE DEPENDENT ON MANY VARIABLES THAT CANNOT BE FULLY PREDICTED, INCLUDING FUTURE STORM EVENTS. WHILE WE DO NOT ENVISION THESE

CONDITIONS RESULTING IN A SUDDEN COLLAPSE OF THE STRUCTURE, THEY COULD AFFECT ITS FUTURE SERVICEABILITY.

THE INDIAN RIVER INLET BRIDGE IS MADE UP OF FIVE SPANS OF STEEL GIRDER BEAMS, EACH APPROXIMATELY 250 FEET LONG. THIS MULTIPLE-BEAM SYSTEM MEANS THAT IF ONE SPAN FAILED, OTHER SPANS WOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY THE LOAD, ALLOWING THE BRIDGE TO REMAIN STANDING.

HAVING SAID ALL THAT, HOWEVER, WE ARE DOING MORE. THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TAKES YEARLY INLET BOTTOM SURVEYS. WE HAVE LAND SURVEY EQUIPMENT READINGS TAKEN EVERY MONTH. MOST RECENTLY, WE TEAMED UP WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE TO INSTALL SENSORS ON THE PIERS OF THE BRIDGE.

THESE SENSORS WILL OFFER THE DEPARTMENT ADDED CONFIRMATION THAT THE BRIDGE PIERS ARE STABLE. SHOULD ANY CHANGE OCCUR, THE SENSORS WOULD PROVIDE DELDOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROMPTLY RESPOND. AND NEXT YEAR, AGAIN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UNIVERSITY, WE WILL BE INSTALLING SONAR EQUIPMENT AT THE BASE OF THE PIERS THAT WILL DETECT ANY CHANGES TO THE INLET BOTTOM.

WE WILL REMAIN DILIGENT AND VIGILANT IN OUR INSPECTION AND MONITORING OF THE CURRENT BRIDGE STRUCTURE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE TRAVELING PUBLIC. THIS CAN ALSO BE SAID OF THE MORE THAN 1,400 BRIDGES WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IN THIS STATE.



IN CLOSING, I WAS CERTAINLY AWARE THAT WITH AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THIS MAGNITUDE, THERE WAS GOING TO BE SCRUTINY FROM RESIDENTS, LEGISLATORS AND THE MEDIA. I UNDERSTAND THAT, ACCEPT IT AND SHARE THOSE SAME FRUSTRATIONS.

BE THAT AS IT MAY, THE DECISION I MADE TO BUILD A LONGER BRIDGE STRUCTURE IS BASED ON THE BEST INFORMATION AVAILABLE, AND BASED ON WHAT IS THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION FOR THE STATE AND BEACH AREA COMMUNITIES. I DON'T EXPECT IT TO MAKE ME POPULAR, BUT NONETHELESS A DECISION HAD TO BE MADE.

I HAVE DONE AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO ALL I CAN TO COMMUNICATE THE FACTS TO THE PUBLIC AND TO YOU ALL THROUGH A VARIETY OF COMMUNICATIONS.

*WE WILL BUILD THIS BRIDGE.* WE HAVE THE RESOURCES, THE KNOW-HOW, AND THE ABSOLUTE DETERMINATION TO GET THIS DONE.

THANK YOU.